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August 22, 2000

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Magalie Roman Salas
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Federal Communications Commission
Portals II
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AUG 22 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

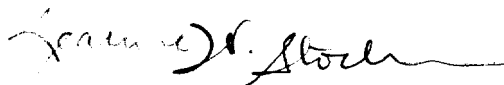
**Re: File No. NSD-L-00-95; CC Docket 96-98;
Reply Comments of Allegiance Telecom of New Jersey, Inc.**

Dear Secretary Salas:

On behalf of Allegiance Telecom of New Jersey, Inc. ("Allegiance"), enclosed please find an original and four (4) copies of Allegiance's reply comments in the above-referenced docket. Please date stamp and return the enclosed extra copy. Concurrent with this filing, Allegiance is submitting two (2) copies of its reply comments to the Network Services Division.

Should you have any questions with respect to this matter, please do not hesitate to call Ron Del Sesto at (202) 945-6923.

Respectfully submitted,



Jeanne W. Stockman
Ronald W. Del Sesto, Jr.

Enclosure

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**BEFORE THE
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554**

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AUG 22 2000

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)	
)	File No. NSD-L-00-95
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities)	
Petition for Delegated Authority to)	
Implement Number Conservation)	CC Docket No. 96-98
Measures)	

**REPLY COMMENTS OF
ALLEGIANCE TELECOM OF NEW JERSEY, INC.**

Allegiance Telecom of New Jersey, Inc. ("Allegiance") by undersigned counsel and pursuant to the Common Carrier Bureau's July 7, 2000 Public Notice,¹ submits its reply comments in the above-captioned proceeding. Allegiance expects that the Federal Communications Commission ("Commission") will provide the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities ("Board") with delegated authority to implement number conservation consistent with previous grants of authority to other state commissions. While Allegiance does not necessarily agree with the full extent of numbering authority granted to the state commissions, Allegiance focuses its reply comments on the value of rate center consolidation ("RCC") as an important number conservation tool. Allegiance is aware that the Board need not petition the Commission in order to engage in RCC. Allegiance respectfully requests, however, that in responding to the Board's petition, the Commission emphasize the importance of RCC on number conservation and recommend that the Board initiate RCC as soon as reasonably possible.

¹ *Common Carrier Bureau Seeks Comment on the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities Petition for Delegated Authority to Implement Number Conservation Measures*, NSD File No. L-00-95, Public Notice, DA 00-1508 (rel. July 7, 2000).

I. Rate Center Consolidation is Essential to Achieve Meaningful Number Conservation

The root causes of number exhaust are the allocation of numbers in blocks of 10,000 and the need to obtain distinct NXXs to serve individual rate centers. Thousands-block number pooling ("TNP") remedies only one of these causes, and allows other inefficiencies to continue unchecked. The current rate center structure exacerbates number exhaust because a carrier must obtain an NXX code for each rate center in which it provides service. RCC combats this problem by enabling carriers to use fewer NXX codes to provide service throughout their region, thereby reducing the demand for NXX codes and improving number utilization. TNP does nothing to alleviate the gross inefficiencies associated with the current rate center structure and the need to obtain distinct NXX's to serve the individual rate centers within a particular numbering plan area ("NPA"). If the Board were to proceed only with TNP, carriers would still have to acquire numbering resources in each rate center, squandering scarce numbering resources and thwarting overall number conservation.

In order to achieve the greatest number conservation possible and to extend the life of New Jersey's NPAs, the Commission should take this opportunity to emphasize the important role of RCC. Allowing rate centers to remain segregated throughout the State of New Jersey will unnecessarily waste valuable numbering resources. Current inefficiencies will only be exacerbated as more competitors enter the marketplace. Adopting RCC as an additional measure of conservation will prolong, to the greatest extent possible, the life of New Jersey's NPAs. Combining or collapsing several existing rate centers into fewer rate centers will also provide new market entrants with reliable and competitively neutral access to NXX codes and telephone numbers on a going forward basis. Due to the benefits it achieves, RCC must be an essential component of any comprehensive long-term number conservation scheme.

III. Rate Center Consolidation is Competitively Neutral

RCC is a beneficial number conservation tool because it can be implemented on a competitively-neutral basis. Unlike TNP, RCC is not dependent on local number portability. Thus, a greater pool of numbering resource users can participate in this conservation method, making it more effective. RCC also eliminates the need to impose significant costs on carriers while simultaneously achieving a greater degree of number conservation than that realized by pooling alone. TNP may also have a negative impact on new entrants seeking numbering resources; however, RCC actually opens more areas to competition by allowing new market entrants to acquire less NXX codes to serve a larger area, thereby increasing the fill rate of NPAs that have undergone RCC. Accordingly, in the interest of maximizing overall number conservation while maintaining a level competitive playing field, Allegiance strongly encourages the Commission to recommend that the Board implement RCC as an integral component of a comprehensive numbering conservation scheme.

IV. Rate Center Consolidation Must Be Evaluated on a Case-by-Case Basis

While RCC promises to be an effective tool in number conservation, this is not to say, however, that RCC should be viewed as the only appropriate solution for number exhaust in every circumstance. Specifically, "the cost of RCC is subject to a number of variables unique to each geographical area and service provider."² In addition to these varying costs, implementation of RCC could have other impacts depending upon the circumstances. Most significantly, E911 routing could

² See *Number Resource Optimization Working Group Report to North American Numbering Council*. (rel. Oct. 20, 1998), § 1.4 ("Report").

be affected adversely if RCC is implemented in a haphazard manner.³ Notwithstanding this uncertainty surrounding the costs and administrative implications of implementing RCC on an individual case basis, Allegiance believes that it can be a valuable tool in throughout New Jersey in promoting competitive entry, preserving numbering resources going forward, and allowing carriers to make the most efficient use of the NXX codes they presently hold.

Specific examples of RCC prove that, when implemented thoughtfully, it has additional benefits. RCC does not require national agreement for implementation. Also, implementation can occur rapidly. For example, five separate NPAs in Texas underwent RCC within four months of regulatory approval.⁴ Furthermore, as also demonstrated in Texas, RCC need not impose excessive or undue costs on the industry. In this case, the costs were so insignificant that cost recovery was not even addressed.⁵ Even the costs that incumbents claim in the form of lost intraLATA toll revenue were not realized in Texas.⁶ Finally, if the consolidation of rate centers is accomplished without affecting local calling scopes, then, from a customer perspective, it can implemented virtually seamlessly without risk of customer confusion. Clearly, experience demonstrates the value of RCC as a important number conservation tool.

V. Conclusion

³ *Id.* § 1.9.1.

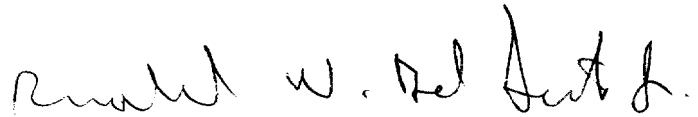
⁴ *Id.* ¶ 1.3 n.3.

⁵ *See id.* ¶ 1.4.

⁶ *See id.* ¶ 1.4.2. (noting that there was no discernible shift in toll revenue).

For the foregoing reasons, in responding to the Board's petition Allegiance respectfully requests the Commission to emphasize the importance of RCC to long-term number conservation and to encourage the Board to engage in RCC as soon as reasonably possible.

Respectfully submitted,

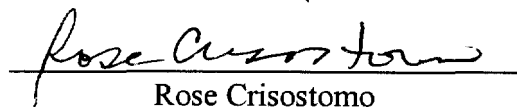
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ronald W. Del Sesto, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

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Dated: August 22, 2000

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, **Rose Crisostomo**, hereby certify that on August 22, 2000 the foregoing document was served on the individuals listed on the following service list by first-class U.S. Mail (or by overnight delivery/hand-delivery, as marked*).


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